

Lawfully Admitted Aliens—When You Need A Number And When You Don't

When A Lawfully Admitted Alien Needs A Number

If you are a lawfully admitted alien with Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) permission to work in the U.S., you need a Social Security number. Also, if you are a lawfully admitted alien who does not have permission to work, but wants to enlist in the U.S. military, federal law requires you to have a Social Security number. The number is used as your military service number.

You May Need A Number For Other Reasons

State and local laws that conform with federal law may require you to give a Social Security number—even if you don't have permission to work. The Social Security Act permits state and local governments to use the number to administer laws related to—

- taxes;
- general public assistance;
- driver licensing; or
- motor vehicle registration.

How Do You Get A Number?

To apply for a Social Security number—

- Call or visit one of our offices to apply for a number.
- Provide original documents showing your age, identity and lawful alien status (including your permission to work in the U.S.).

If you don't have permission to work, but still need a number, you must provide a letter, on letterhead stationery (no form letters or photocopies), from the government agency

requiring you to get a number. The letter must—

- specifically identify you as the applicant;
- cite the law requiring you to have a Social Security number; and
- indicate that you meet all the agency's requirements, except having the number.

If you are assigned a number for nonwork purposes, you can't use it to work. If you use it to work, we may inform INS.

If You Need A Number For Tax Purposes—What Can You Do?

If you need a number for tax purposes, but don't meet Social Security's requirements to be assigned a number, you can apply for an Individual Taxpayer Identification Number (ITIN) from the Internal Revenue Service (IRS).

Visit IRS in person or by calling the toll-free IRS number 1-800-TAXFORM (1-800-829-3676) and request form W-7, *Application for an Individual Taxpayer Identification Number*.

What Can You Get Without A Number

As a lawfully admitted alien, you can obtain many benefits and services without having a number, even though you're asked to give one. You don't need a number to—

- **Purchase savings bonds.** A lawfully admitted alien may be designated a co-owner or beneficiary without a number.
- **Conduct business with a financial institution.** For tax purposes, financial institutions will ask you for a taxpayer identification number. If you aren't eligible for a Social

Security number, contact IRS. IRS can help you determine if you need an ITIN.

- **Register for school or apply for educational tests.** Schools aren't authorized to use the number to administer education programs. A student applying for the SAT, GRE and other educational tests doesn't need a Social Security number to take the test.
- **Report group health insurance coverage.** Employers aren't required to report Social Security numbers for lawfully admitted alien family members who are covered by group health plans but don't have numbers.
- **Apply for school lunch programs.** The parent applying for free or reduced-price lunch for the child(ren) can use his/her own number or should get a letter from Social Security stating no number will be assigned.
- **Apply for HUD housing.** Family members age 6 and older must give a Social Security number or get a letter from us stating no number can be assigned.

For More Information

You can get more information 24 hours a day by calling our toll-free number, **1-800-772-1213**. You can call for an appointment or speak to a service representative between the hours of 7 a.m. and 7 p.m. on business days. Our lines are busiest early in the week and early in the month, so, if your business can wait, it's best to call at other times.

People who are deaf or hard of hearing may call our toll-free TTY number, 1-800-325-0778, between 7 a.m. and 7 p.m. on business days.

Social Security information is now available on the Internet at www.ssa.gov.

We treat all calls confidentially—whether they're made to our toll-free numbers or to one of our local offices. We also want to make sure that you receive accurate and courteous service. That's why we have a second Social Security representative monitor some incoming and outgoing telephone calls..

